

Greens to convene in Syracuse

■ GREENS
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nizing a neighborhood-based movement for a Green city and region..."

Convention delegates are told "the city's population has declined ... as corporations have abandoned the manufacturing base of Syracuse.

"The blocks of abandoned buildings and empty lots testify to economic decline. But they also represent resources for an ecological redevelopment of the city."

The Greater Syracuse Convention and Visitors Bureau did not recruit the convention, mainly because it's not expected to be a money-maker for local businesses.

The average convention delegate in the United States spends \$107 a day, said Jerry Gallagher, the bureau's director. The Green Party is expected to spend much less.

"I don't have anything against them," Gallagher said. "They have every right to be wherever they want. Hopefully, while they're here, they'll spend some money."

Gallagher, however, objected to the Greens' portrayal of Syracuse as a declining city.

"I think that's an unfair characterization of our fine community," he said. "But I think after they've been here, they might change their opinion."

While the Green Party USA is in town, it will be joined by large numbers of letter carriers and card players.

The National Association of Letter Carriers, New York State Division, and the American Contract Bridge League will hold conventions during the same week.

The Greens selected Syracuse for the convention after members of their California chapter couldn't agree on hosting the meeting in Los Angeles.

"Originally we wanted to go to Los Angeles because of the rebellion after the Rodney King verdict," Hawkins said. "Then we had to scramble for another site."

One reason Los Angeles was considered an ideal site is because the party advocates "Green Justice" by calling for social justice and equality. The controversy over the King verdict would have served to underscore that platform.

The Green Party USA has been a leader in the fight against envi-

What's happening

Across the nation today — the official Earth Day — events range from a concert with rock star Paul McCartney to library programs promoting environmental literature and activities for children. Here is a listing of some events in Onondaga County.

Saturday

■ The Outer Comstock Neighborhood Association will sponsor its first spring cleanup of Comstock Park. The park is at Comstock Avenue and East Colvin Street. There will be a ceremony at 11 a.m. to commemorate the group's "adoption" of the park.

■ Earth Day neighborhood cleanups are scheduled throughout Onondaga County. Call the Resource Recovery Agency recycling hot line at 453-2870 to find the cleanup planned in your area. Cleanup organizers should call the agency to arrange for a free drop-off of trash.

Sunday

■ Syracuse Earth Day Celebration happens in Thornden Park. The Syracuse Department of Parks and Recreation and the New York Public Interest Research Group will sponsor the annual celebration from 10 a.m. until 7 p.m., rain or shine. Activities include speakers, campus and community groups, and environmental games for children. Live music will feature the Mexican Mud Band, The Westcott Jug Suckers, Homel-Alaniz, Waga DunDunn and Teaux Jam. No alcohol is allowed in the park. Adelphia Cable will hold a panel discussion on environmental issues affecting Onondaga County.

■ Earth Day cleanup of Thornden Park in Syracuse will be sponsored by the New York Public Interest Research Group, Operation Separation and Syracuse University's Students Offering Service.

■ Baltimore Woods in Marcellus will hold an Earth Day celebration with wildlife art exhibits from noon to 5 p.m., and will offer a free wild-flower walk with Mary Stebbins beginning at 2 p.m.

ronmental racism, pointing out that landfills and other undesirable projects are disproportionately located in poor and minority neighborhoods.

Greens also advocate restructuring government and bringing policy decisions back to the neighborhood level.

Hawkins said he expects up to 300 people to attend the convention from across the United States. An additional 300 are expected to attend from Upstate New York and surrounding cities. About 10 delegates will come from international cities.

The main conference is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 14 and 15, in Kirk Park.

Meetings and workshops in the park will focus on the themes of Green Cities, Green Justice and Green Politics. Among the speakers will be Ron Daniels, the party's nominee in the 1992 presidential election.

Free camping will be provided at the Earthwise Education Center at Cornerstone Farm in Vienna. The farm, 40 miles northeast of Syracuse, is a community-supported or-

ganic agriculture farm. It is known for providing apprenticeship programs for the homeless.

Convention delegates can buy meal tickets for vegetarian food. Vegetarian barbecue picnics are also planned.

Hawkins said the party has an active membership of about 10,000 in the United States. About 3,000 are dues-paying members. Last year, the group held its annual convention in Minneapolis.

One of the potential highlights of the convention in Syracuse is a showdown between the Green Party USA and a competing Green party.

Randy Toler, national director of "The Green Party," has promised to travel to Syracuse from his base in Illinois.

Toler said he will call for recognition of his party, which he claims has 2,000 members. He said the party focuses strictly on environmental concerns.

Hawkins said Toler's organization is not legitimate.

"It's one guy," Hawkins said. "He's conned the media several times."